BLOGS

The Constituent Assembly of India: The People Who Wrote Our Constitution

Adtiya Aryan · 26 Dec 2025

In the CLAT 2026 exam, many aspirants were surprised to see a question related to **B. N. Rau**. This was not random.

It was a clear signal that CLAT expects you to understand not just Articles and cases, but also the **people and processes behind the Indian Constitution**.

To truly understand Indian constitutional law, we must first understand the **Constituent Assembly of India**.

What Was the Constituent Assembly?

The Constituent Assembly was the body entrusted with one historic task: to draft the Constitution of independent India.

It was formed in 1946, while India was still under British rule. After independence in August 1947, the same Assembly took on the responsibility of framing the Constitution. It functioned for almost three years, finally adopting the Constitution on 26 November 1949, which came into force on 26 January 1950.

This was not just a legal exercise. It was a political, social, and moral project aimed at shaping the future of a deeply diverse nation.

Who Were the Members of the Constituent Assembly?

The Constituent Assembly had 389 members originally, which later reduced to 299 members after Partition.

How Were They Chosen?

- Members were not directly elected by the public.

- They were elected by the provincial legislative assemblies.
- Seats were roughly allocated based on population.
- Representation was given to different communities, provinces, and princely states.

Who Were These Members?

The Assembly included:

- Lawyers
- Freedom fighters
- Social reformers
- Economists
- Academicians
- Leaders from different regions, castes, religions, and ideologies

Importantly, the Assembly had **15 women members**, including Hansa Mehta, Durgabai Deshmukh, and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. For its time, this was progressive.

Key Figures and Their Roles

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

- Chairman of the Drafting Committee
- Often called the chief architect of the Constitution
- Played a crucial role in shaping Fundamental Rights, equality, and safeguards for marginalized communities

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

- President of the Constituent Assembly
- Ensured smooth functioning of debates and procedures
- Later became India’s first President

Jawaharlal Nehru

- Moved the Objectives Resolution, which laid down the philosophical foundation of the Constitution
- Advocated for democracy, secularism, and socialism
- His vision heavily influenced the Preamble

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- Headed important committees related to federalism and integration of princely states
- Played a key role in shaping Centre-State relations

N. Rau: The Man Behind the Drafting Process

Since B. N. Rau's role was tested in CLAT 2026, it is essential to understand why he matters.

Who Was B. N. Rau?

- He was appointed as the Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly.
- Though not a politician, his legal expertise was invaluable.

What Did He Do?

- Prepared the initial draft of the Constitution
- Studied constitutions of various countries like the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, and Australia
- Advised the Assembly on constitutional design, federalism, and rights
- Played a crucial role in shaping provisions on the judiciary and executive

In simple terms, **B. N. Rau laid the legal foundation** on which the Drafting Committee worked. Without his work, the drafting process would have been far more difficult.

Other Important People You Should Know

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar

- Member of the Drafting Committee
- Strong advocate of federalism and constitutional morality

K. M. Munshi

- Contributed significantly to Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles
- Supported a strong Centre with individual freedoms

N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar

- Played an important role in Centre-State relations
- Instrumental in drafting provisions related to emergency powers

H. C. Mookherjee

- Vice President of the Constituent Assembly
- Represented minority interests and social harmony

How Did the Constituent Assembly Work?

The Assembly functioned through:

- Committees for specific subjects
- Open debates where members freely expressed disagreements
- Detailed discussions on each Article
- Democratic decision making through voting

Over **11 sessions**, the Assembly debated almost every clause thoroughly. This is why the Indian Constitution is one of the **longest and most detailed constitutions in the world**.

Why the Constituent Assembly Matters for CLAT

Understanding the Constituent Assembly helps you:

- Interpret constitutional provisions better
- Answer Legal Reasoning questions logically
- Understand the intent behind Articles
- Handle passages related to constitutional philosophy and history

CLAT does not test rote learning. It tests **contextual understanding**, and the Constituent Assembly provides that context.

Conclusion

The Indian Constitution is not just a legal document. It is the result of collective wisdom, debate, disagreement, and compromise by the Constituent Assembly.

From political visionaries like Nehru to legal minds like Ambedkar and B. N. Rau, each member played a unique role. Understanding them helps us appreciate why the Constitution balances liberty with order, unity with diversity, and power with accountability.

For CLAT aspirants, knowing the Const.ituent Assembly is not optional anymore. It is foundational